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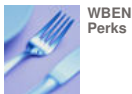


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Posted: Monday, 15 August 2011 3:33PM

Erie Co. Lawmakers Approve Sales Tax Extension

Buffalo, NY (WBEN) The extra .75 percent sales tax will continue to hang over shoppers in Erie County. The legislature unanimously approved a two year extension on the sales tax.

Lawmaker Ray Walter (R-Clarence) says that little extension means a lot. "That represents over \$230 million in revenue to the county. That is almost equal to the property tax revenue for the entire county, which is \$235 million," says Walter.

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"With 90 percent of our budget mandated by Albany, most of that going toward Medicaid, retirement benefits and other things we don't locally have control over, unless people wanted to see a 90 percent jump in property taxes, the sales tax is the only way to cover those expenses."

Walter says the sales tax falls on the shoulders of Canadian shoppers as well as residents. "That really shares the burden with those who are just residents of Erie County," notes Walter

He says changes in Albany are needed for lawmakers to consider lowering the sales tax. "Remember, we're also talking about sheriff's road patrols, our county park system, the quality of life things we appreciate from our county government. So, without that sales tax, the only thing we'd be able to fund would be mandated things from the state," notes Walter.

We're Number One!

(WBEN) The extra .75 percent sales tax that was extended Monday, maintains Erie County's dubious honor as paying the highest sales taxes in the state.

The state collects 4 percent on every sale, but only Erie and Oneida counties add on amounts that bring the total to 8.75 percent.

Herkimer and Naussau counties trail, with each adding on their own 4.25 after the state's cut.

Seventeen counties across the state - including Wyoming County locally - assess 4 percent taxes above the state's 4 %.

WBEN Extra: County-by-County Breakdown from the NYS Tax Dept.

Chautauqua County is one of the most recent counties in New York to hike their sales tax, adding 3.5 percent as of August 2010.

A few cities in New York, like Olean for example, also assess a sales tax. None however boost the overall level to one above that paid in Erie County.



On The WBEN Liveline:
Erie Co. Legislator Kevin Hardwick

Former Legislator Len Lenihan, there in early "temporary" tax discussions, year ago

The legislature also approved who would handle the next bridge loan of about \$90 million. Walter says the legislature voted to allow the control board to do the borrowing. But he adds the county comptroller's office will have the opportunity first to shop around for a better borrowing rate. Comptroller Mark Poloncarz has a chance to finalize a deal with M&T Securities in an effort to maximize tax savings. If that cannot be accomplished, the control board would then take over.